The Windows Have Eyes

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/17335001.

Rating:	Not Rated
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham's Father, ALL OF THE OCS
Additional Tags:	Original Character(s), season 1 rewrite kinda, like it starts there but its just gonna develop from there, Other Additional Tags to Be Added, they wont get uber heavy but there will be discussion of sensitive events later on, youre gonna love amma, Team Sassy Science (Hannibal), i love that thats and official tag, yall dont include them enough btw, Medium Will Graham, Alternate Universe - Supernatural Elements, quite a bit of this is gonna be based on lore im posting on tumblr at a later date
Language:	English
Stats:	Published: 2019-01-07 Updated: 2019-10-08 Words: 4,235 Chapters: 4/?

The Windows Have Eyes

by Cheshire_Jinx

Summary

> “Finn, listen to me and listen to me good; there is no child in that house. I know what you think you see, but there isn’t a singular living creature sitting at that window. Now take this box and go inside. Stay within my sight.”

Notes

> Okay so i've been gone a long time and i've only gotten back into writing on saturday. What matters is that im back with updates and edits

Peace Flees

The girl in the window hadn't stopped staring at him since they arrived. She didn't move either. She just watched.

Will kept watch of the window the entire day. Maybe he could go play when he was done helping Amma.

"Amma, can I go play with the girl across the street when we're done?" the six year old asked.

"What little girl?" Amma asked

"The one in the window up there."

Amma had been sure that when she and Beau came to look at the house, there hadn't been a little girl across the street. Ammalina turned around slowly and looked up. The specter stood still, staring. Her clothing looked old, like the hand me downs Ammalina herself wore when she was small. The girl lifted a hand and waved.

"Arimondo" Amma breathed the girl glowed green for a moment.

"Finn, listen to me and listen to me good; there is no child in that house. I know what you think you see, but there isn't a singular living creature sitting at that window. Now take this box and go inside. Stay within my sight."

"Okie dokie."

Later that night, Amma tucked Will in for bed. "Hey, Shark Fin? Remember the girl you saw across the street?"

"Yes."

"And do you remember when I told you about spirits?"

"Is she a spirit?" Will's voice lowered.

Amma reached out a finger to stroke his small cheek "Yes. dear"

"I can't talk to her, can I?" Will's eyes glistened a bit. It was already hard for him to make friends, much less keep them; it was just his luck one of the few kids on this block turned out to be off limits. Amma gave a heavy sigh. "No, sweetheart. As far as the people in that house know, she isn't there. From what I can tell she's bound to that house and she can't leave. Only we know she's there."

“She has to be really lonely.” He lamented

“Very much, in fact; it’s most likely been years since she’s had a chance to talk to anyone and have them acknowledge her. But listen here, you are under no circumstances to go over there. Spirits can cause a lot of trouble for the living, especially when they’re upset. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

Ammalina gave one final tuck to Will’s covers and kissed his forehead. “I love you so much, Finny”

“I love you too, Amma”

Amma started towards the door. “Sweet dreams, mon chou”

“Sweet dreams, Ma poule.” Amma shut the door. She whispered a small prayer at his door before walking away.

Hours later, the house had grown quiet and still. A small corner of Will’s room started spilling its darkness onto nearby surfaces. One tendril slid with purpose towards the bed, creeping up the sheets before touching the small ankle of sleeping body. The six year old, previously blissful, grew distressed in his sleep.

Soon, his eyes threw themselves open and a small pair of lungs screamed louder than one would have thought possible. The cry vibrated through the floorboards and walls; a final song for the last night of peace the boy would know for quite a while.

William Phinneas Graham

Will should have just stayed in bed. His life would be a lot simpler if he did that more often.

The call came in at 7 AM, a perfect reminder of why none of his classes happened before 1030.

"You better be calling me to tell me I've won the lottery.” he grumbled.

“Don't you think i wish i could call you with good news this early in the morning. I'm coming to get you, there’s been a body drop an hour from you.”

"There better be goddamn breakfast in your hand, Bev.”

“Would I show up with any less.”

Will may have jumped the gun when he devoured the bacon croissant of peace offering, but only slightly.

Body drop was a very light way of describing the scene. Limbs and torsos were scattered around an altar that remained only vaguely familiar in the back of Will's mind. The centerpiece of the altar was a woman.She sat ramrod straight, held up by a complicated network of metal hooks and woven branches. Her curly, black hair was entangled in the web of branches. She held what could only be presumed as her own eyes in her right hand, and her heart in the left. Her abdomen had been split open and emptied into a basket on her lap. All except her uterus which lay at her feet. "The victim's name is Emmaline Cartiér nee Jones. Big Broadway Actress in her early 60s. Went missing over two weeks ago after attending a gala with her second husband, in which she took a bathroom break as they were getting ready to leave and never showed to get back into the car.” Jack introduced.

“Her family relocated to Baltimore permanently after her disappearance, and they will be waiting at Quantico when we return. I'll need something to tell them.”

The longer he looked at the woman, the more the alien familiarity in his gut disturbed him. He couldn't quite place where he knew her from, but it definitely wasn't Broadway. Jack and the rest cleared out into the surrounding area and the pendulum swung. She was gorgeous as always, a near perfect debutante. But only near perfect. She had a past and hell to pay for it. Emmaline had been gifted with beauty, talent, and grace in surplus. What the gods had left out were good morals. In addition to her gifts, she had been blessed with a family; not the one she parades around in now, but one she built from the ground up only to abandon for champagne and city lights. It was despicable. An action undeserving of mercy. How dare she forsake what wonders she had been gifted for false idols and painted faces. She's finally been forsaken by the gods who blessed her, and now I'll help this sinner find redemption. First we must drain the tainted blood, each and every drop must go. Then we must offer all to the

gods. Starting with the envious eyes that lusted after gifts that weren't ours to claim. Next, We'll take out the heart; greedy and adulterous. From there, we'll bare all to the gods; remind them of the good they had done. Lastly, We'll offer the power the gods had entrusted in woman to continue the gods' work. Disrespectful in its use as she may have been, Emmaline had created wonder and life with the power until it had grown tired of improper use, and begun to wreak havoc on her body. She was now-

A voice like honey and heavenly rage rang out from behind him, pulling him out of the killer's mind with a startling force."WILLIAM PHINNEAS GRAHAM, STEP AWAY FROM THAT ALTAR OR I'LL PERSONALLY TAN YOUR HIDE"

I Do

Will hadn't felt fear like this since the last time he tried sneaking a piece of Amma's peach cobbler before dinner.

Will spun quickly and straightened his back as if he had been caught muddin up his Sunday best. Ammalina Mays stood every inch of her polished 5'7 amidst the many faces of shocked FBI agents. Will hadn't moved another inch, so she began stalking towards him. "Maám you cannot be h-" Jack attempted to intercept. Ï don't give a flying rat's left nutsack about where I am and am not supposed to be, James Mikael Crawford. Now get out of my way before I make you." Jack startled at the use of his full name but didn't recover in time to keep Amma from proceeding. "William, if I have to call your name away from the goddamn corpse one more time…" Will rushed over to her side before she could give another threat. Amma then turned to the confused group of agents. "Don't you all have jobs to do, or is the government paying you to look like frightened deer. And not one of you better step in that salt line before I've gone over there." Amma pointed back to the crime scene and the agent proceeded to scurry back to it like a swarm of ants.

"Now I know damn well I raised you better than to cross the salt line of ritual altars, so all I am going to ask you is whether or not you've lost every bit of sense I made sure you were raised with while living on your own." Will had enough sense left to look ashamed and bow his head before attempting to apologize. "Let the boy breathe, Amma. He's just trying to do what he's getting paid for. He made a simple mistake not checking to see if the line was active before he did." He hadn't heard either of these voices in so long. Will and Beau Graham hadn't seen each other in years due to their work schedules making travel and catching the other for even the odd, every once in a while phone call tough to manage. Will couldn't help the smile that spread across his face at his father familiar lines. He proceeded to throw himself into Beau arms with no hesitation. "What are you doing here?" his asked his father's shoulder.

"Well, Amma wouldn't stop fussin' about how long it's been since you last called, then got to bellyachin' about the last time you visited. So, here we are." Beau squeezed once more before releasing him.

"The only fussin' and bellyachin' that got done was by that overgrown worrywart. Now, come over here. You know better than to hug me after you hug him." Amma may have been shorter than Will now, but she somehow always hugged him in a way that made him feel five years old again. She pulled away and took his face into her hands. They stayed that way for a

long while, Amma reading deep into Will's eyes. "Your supposed to call when your nightmares start getting bad. I shouldn't have to remind you." Amma and Beau had always been the go to people when his empathy became too much to bear. He just hadn't been able to bring himself to bother them in so long.

"Nice as it is Will, we are at work here. We don't have time for family reunions." Jack made the biggest mistake of his life, and cut his eyes at Amma. When asked, none of the witnessed can say with certainty what she did. All they saw was Jack glare in her direction before howling in pain the very next second. "Now you listen here, Jack Crawford." Amma ground his name with her tongue like gravel. "You'll do well not to spite those who enter your domain offering assistance." Amma would never admit it, but her worst quality was assuming someone needed her help. She was never wrong in the assumption, just wrong for assuming.

Jack held back the comments he wanted to make with great difficulty. "Well I can't have civilians on an official crime scene, So you'll have to leave your assistance on the other side of the police line." Amma gave a close-lipped giggle and slid a card from her shawl.

"Grand Maester Ammalina Mays, Expert Consultant in all Supernatural and Spiritual."

"Nobody on this side of the country is going to come on such short notice, especially if your agents touch that line before I do. And I can assure you they won't answer the phone because I'm already in the state, " She relaxed her shoulders. "My rates go up during consultations on my vacations."

Beau and Amma turned towards the scene and their faces contorted immediately. "I came up with many scenarios on how we'd cross paths; this surely wasn't among them, Emmaline." Beau whispered. Amma squeezed his hand before stepping towards the salt line and getting to work.

"You know the victim, Mr. Graham?" Jack questioned.

"I've known her my whole life."

"Then you do understand your sudden appearance after her death poses suspicion?"

Will stared at his father, at the bittersweet heartache at finally seeing the love of his life after so many years, at the shattering hope of ever fixing the bridge she burned.

“I do.”

A Whirlwind Romance

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Amma made quick work of deactivating the salt line, thankful that no agents had touched the shrine.

"The line is safe. Your agents can cross, Crawford" The agents jumped at Crawfords yell before finally begging to log the main display. Two scurrying to make quick work of getting Amma's biometrics.

"I could arrest you for contaminating my crime scene"

"You could but you would be a damned fool for doing it." Amma wiped her forehead with her handkerchief. She turned towards Emmaline's body once more. "How long will it take your people to finish up. I want to give my statement and condolences to Killian and the Cartier's before 5. Dinner has to be on the table by 7." Ever true to her schedule. "You can be escorted out right now. You're not a necessary presence and can go about your day at anytime but Will stays as long as I need him." Jack knew it wouldn't work but he tried his hand anyway. Another word about the mishandling of such a high profile case would put him right in the seat he had successfully avoided for years. Amma only fixed him with another look.

Beau remained mostly silent. He could feel Will's eyes boring into the side of his face, dying to ask what he thought but struggling to breach the subject. "I'll be okay. I may have had a candle out for her all these years but I moved on for the most part."

"Daddy."

"I kept up with her career but I never contacted her. Amma did, pretty sure they kept up a very tentative rapport after a few years."

"Da-"

“I wanted to. Badly. But I couldn’t. I think they need you over there, Son”

Will left very reluctantly. His father wasn’t one of those stereotypical, “all feelings shoved in a lock box that never leaves the underside of his bed” stoic men. He grew on a small farm under the care of his mother and three other siblings with more than enough room to emote. Between a drama obsessed best friend and later wife, a brother with Asperger’s, and two nosy, older sisters; Beauregard Graham couldn’t entirely wrap his head around a life where one hadn’t learned every way to express themselves and grow comfortable moderating what they hide from others. That didn’t mean he didn’t keep things to himself, just that he never bothered to hide how he felt from Ammalina and Will.

Never before did he wish he had.

The clean up went at an agonizing pace. Will wanting his father and Amma off the chopping block. Jack running out of patience for Amma. Beau trying to keep a lid on it. All the while, Amma remained Amma. She introduced herself the team, personally thanking Beverly for trying to befriend her boy. After awhile, Beau and Amma separated into their escorts.

“All she’s going to do is tell you you’re stupid and complain about the interrogation room.” Will remarked as they walked to the cars. He stopped Jack as he tried to open his door. “They made have had a past but they would rather burn churches than lay an unkind finger in her direction.” Will didn’t meet his eyes, but Jack could see the effort he put into trying. “All we’re going to do is shorten our suspect list, gotta rule out the family first and see what they know about anything or one with the motive to harm her. Just following routine. Nothing more, nothing less.”

Will could take that.

Ammalina filled the entirety of the room she sat in. Always had, always would.

She had been raised with the confidence and audacity to punch the gods, and every bit of common sense not to do so. As the eldest and one of three girls among that generation of her family, she had grown quite adept at making sure the very air surrounding her didn’t press its luck. They’d known better than to keep her waiting inside of this dreadful room without some

courtesies, the mississippi accent that drove her there left tea and best cookies the place had to offer in its nervous wake.

Lord, she didn't see how repeat offenders could do it; the chair she sat in was more than enough to make her vow to never end up in it again. She desperately wished they would hurry this foolishness along.

"The sooner I'm out of this godforsaken room, the quicker you catch your killer, Mr. Crawford" She called out. "I hate being left waiting more than I hate bad tea." Bare moments later found Jack pulling out the chair in front of her. He fixed his eyes directly at her as he opened the file.

"What do you know about Emmaline Cartier?"

In the room directly across from them, Beau sat hunched in his seat, too big physically for such a tiny room to contain. He shook his head as he ran through the events of the morning. Just his luck that he finally finds his way back to his ex and only finds fresh remains. The door opens to a near painful reminder.

"Well, well" he smiled. "At least I get a good view as I bare my soul to the cameras. It's been way too long, Dr. Bloom." The apology in her eyes. "It really has been. All that work I put in to make a good impression gone to waste now."

"Not as big of a waste as you imagine, I assure you."

"I haven't gotten to ask any questions yet."

"Then we should get going, Amma'll skin me if we're late."

Alana gave a sad but warm smile, like cookies with the wrong kind of chocolate chips. “Tell me about your history with Emmaline Cartier.”

It wasn’t a secret to anyone about Emmaline hightailed it out of Louisiana on the earliest possible train and took it all the way to stardom. This fact also meant that no one in their tiny town forgot that she never showed up for choir practice that wednesday. Or how puffy Beau’s eyes were when he filed the missing person’s report that thursday. Or how even Ammalina didn’t show up for the first Sunday of the year, leaving the choir stand with two empty seats. The town’s buzzing only grew louder when they saw Ammalina later that day with Will napping on her shoulder, telling the sheriff to call off the search, that Emma was fine; just off finding herself somewhere else.

The town’s buzzing grew near silent until a moving truck appeared after William’s fifth birthday. Beau had become a staple on weekends at the local bar before that Thanksgiving. He walked in looking better than he had in months, paid his tab, letting Motley know that’d be the last time they’d share a drink before he left. Motley took it all in stride, bitter to lose a friend but happy to lose a regular customer. He even helped Beau pack the trucks.

The year had been filled with every kind of news about Broadway’s new diamond. Every paper contained an article on her. Everything from talents to her favorite way to eat fruit. They recently had run away with the details of her ‘whirlwind romance’ with Hollywood giant, Killian Cartier. They had met by chance in a diner. Emma had been soaked to the bone and underdressed for northern weather despite wearing her warmest winter clothes. He offered his coat and the seat across from him to the stranger, curious to know what could have brought a thing like her through the weather. Killian, himself, needed a break from the roads and wanted to give the salt trucks a bit of time to clear a better path through the streets before he returned home. But the same couldn’t possibly be said about the ink black shroud of hair that burst through the diner doors in an oversized green jacket,similarly sized rain boots, and a hellish amount of layers covering her legs. The few that sat in the diner offered all that they could to the shivering specter. After some work, they’d pulled together a fair amount of dry clothing, decent enough for the weather.

Killian offered food and an open ear after she cleaned up and found himself amazed at the endurance of the creature before him. Emmaline told her story of the stagnant life she lived before the train with vibrancy. Every detail painted in a molasses coated haze of eaze and expectancy. He’d heard similar stories of escaping to fame from others but she had been the first he’d ever looked into the eyes and saw real promise. As she went on, it was clear that she was hiding something, but it wasn’t his place to overstep and he was perfectly content not to. They talked for an hour, Killian eventually giving into the need to be home but finding himself diametrically opposed to the thought of allowing Emmaline to make her way through

New York alone. He opened the door to the diner, then to his car. He sped them off to his penthouse and showed her the other side of every door he owned.

The days they spent together in his apartment were tinted pink in a way he hadn't thought possible: lazing around with coco, talking about everything and nothing, on and off performances and god that woman could blow. He was determined to make her a star; and maybe later, if the stars aligned, his spouse. She'd come clean about her marriage and the loving man she left in Louisiana; how the life they created after high school just didn't fit her. Killian understood her perfectly, selfishly motivated her thoughts about divorce, and got his best lawyer to draw up the papers. Maybe if he could give her what that country boy couldn't, she might possibly stay at his side in perfect contentment. His plan was far from perfect, just barely riding the line of moral, but he was truly in it for the long game; Killian would wait decades for her if he had to. Beau sent the papers back, signature lines blank, but with an interesting edit. Emmaline failed to mention the small boy in conversation, and tried to lie about where the handprint came from but ultimately came clean. Could Killian love a woman desperate enough to forsake not only her marriage but the life that came from it? Could he spend his days with someone who so easily waltzed around the subject of her son, who when finally confronted with the topic spoke of such sunlight and happiness but chose to leave him behind also confessing to being unsure if she wanted to bridge contact with him? Killian would cross that bridge later, he had a star to create.

And he did just that. Months flew by and Emmaline took to the stage like a newborn colt to standing. She found her footing as an extra, memorized her lines with astonishing speed as a background, and proved her worth as an understudy. Emma dazzled her way into the hearts of her leads to the point of them vying for her leading role themselves. Not only did she steal the hearts of the actors with her raw talent and drive to learn under old pros; she asked endless questions to the stage crew and directors, needing to know every bit of production and how it all intertwined.

As Emma fell into her new life as if she had been born into it, Killian became a natural staple in her life. He took her to practice in the month she stayed with him, helped her find an apartment once she had enough footing to be on her own, and attended each and every performance no matter how small her role was. They shared meals every saturday and sunday that they're schedules allowed. Confided the highs and lows of showbiz to one another as their careers gained speed. Killian finally came clean the opening night of her debut. Emmaline, in full dress, just laughed to avoid ruining her makeup. She gave him the warmest hug he'd ever received before taking the stage, her performance lit with a different drive than her co-stars were accustomed to. He proposed after the third straight week of packed houses, Emmaline refused to marry before the play ended. Killian arranged for a priest to meet them on the stage after the show so Emmaline's new family could attend. The papers raved about the exclusive wedding and details from the crew they interviewed.

Soon enough, Emmaline fell pregnant. She took to writing and directing as her midsection grew larger. She sang at private events and sealed Killian’s deals with honeysuckle smiles. Not long after the birth of Killian Edward Cartier II, Emmaline graced the stage once more. This time gearing up to prove her worth as a director.

Her new life never slowed down, and neither did she. Cycling through performing, directing, recording, and modeling, Emmaline continued having children and nurturing her marriage; only sparing Louisiana the rare, intrusive thought. Until Louisiana came at her full force.

Chapter End Notes

I want to make it known that I haven't watched Once Upon A Time in forever and the names are purely my subconscious still obsessing over ships i left before seeing thier fate.

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